

**Debbie Beadle**

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**From:** Bob Sorensen <bob@macphersonconstruction.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 04, 2012 9:46 AM  
**To:** Debbie Beadle  
**Subject:** testimony for 9-6-12 PC meeting  
**Attachments:** testimony for 9-6-12 PC meeting.pdf

**Importance:** High

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Debbie, please forward this on to the Planning Commissioners and staff as appropriate. Thanks,

**Robert H. Sorensen**

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EXHIBIT NO. 195.

Robert Sorensen  
22609 N.E. Second Street  
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September 3, 2012

To: Sammamish Planning Commission

Re: 2012 Environmentally Critical Areas update process:

First, let me thank the City Council and Planning Commission for the opportunity to participate in the update process, the availability of all related materials and reports and the ability to comment with the reasonable assurance that my comments will be heard and carefully considered. The comments presented here are NOT being presented on behalf of any organization or group but are my own comments based on my life and experience here in Sammamish. *(For those who do not know me, please see my qualifications at the end of this letter.)*

My comments at this time are regarding some of the major policy items which have been evaluated by staff for the Planning Commission's review.

**Item 2-1 Specify Species of Concern**

**Item 2-2 Increase Wildlife corridor widths**

In reviewing these items, please consider the following:

1. Wildlife is abundant here in Sammamish (as well as the entire eastside region). If there are species which require protections by Federal or State agencies, these should be identified and appropriate protections afforded. However, most of the wildlife that I have observed are common and plentiful.
2. There will always be wildlife in Sammamish no matter what growth or development takes place. The best evidence of this is the abundance of reports of dangerous wildlife (Bears, Cougars & attack Raccoons) being observed in highly urbanized places like Bellevue, West Seattle, North Seattle, Tacoma and the likes.
3. Wildlife will not abide by set-aside 'wildlife corridors'. They will be present wherever there are available food sources.
4. Most of the larger mammalian wildlife in Sammamish are not here for habitat reasons but because there is an abundant un-natural food source (bird feeders, residential gardens, unsecured garbage cans, pet foods and small defenseless pets). We do these animals no favor by encouraging bad behavior and tolerance of human interaction.
5. There has been no BAS presented showing that these larger mammals are necessary or beneficial to our ECA's. On the contrary, the large ECA buffers provide habitat for these animals which in many instances have become pests and hazards to life here in Sammamish. (see item #2 above) In addition, animal waste has been identified as being detrimental to streams and wetlands. (see AMEC response to citizen comment #72)
6. Sammamish has already been classified as an Urban Growth Area and as such should be afforded more flexibility for development than Rural areas.

Please do identify animal life that needs consideration and institute appropriate protections for these animals but do not further restrict residents properties to 'fix' a problem that does not exist.

Item 2-8	Fee-in lieu Mitigation for Streams
Item 2-10	Site Specific Stream Buffer Location
Item 2-11	Variable Regulations for Stream Areas
Item 3-2	215 foot Critical Areas Study
Item 3-3	Fee-in-lieu Mitigation for Wetlands
Item 3-4	Wetland Buffer Modified by Conditions
Item 3-17	Site Specific Wetland Buffer Location
Item 3-18	Variable Regulations for Wetland Areas

In reviewing these items, please consider the following:

1. While we all recognize that we have valuable Environmentally Critical Areas here in Sammamish, there is substantial divergence of opinion as to how best protect these ECA's. The approach to date, and that of the City's consultant, has been simply to stay away from these areas and restrict any development within or near them. While no one can argue that this will have the desired affect regarding maintaining the status-quo of these areas, it does nothing to address issues such as homeowners rights or how to maintain and enjoy these areas as amenities.
2. To date I have seen no information presented regarding BMP's and how property owners can both develop their properties and protect the environment. All the BAS presented so far has been the natural science regarding the function of these ECA's. No technological science has been presented (although much does exist) to show that development can occur very close to many of our ECA's **without having any detrimental affect**.
3. It appears that much of the buffer function is related to wildlife habitat. AMEC's BAS report on Wetlands indicates that most of the water quality functions occur within 20 feet of the critical area (see Table 1. Recommended Buffer widths...) Considering this with the AMEC response to citizen comment #72, for purely protection functions, wetland & stream buffers need only be 20 to 25 feet in width. (However streams and wetlands containing ECA dependent protected species may require additional buffer width for protection from noise and light pollution.) If we are able to consider BMP's for further reducing potential pollutants, a 20 to 25 foot buffer should, in most cases, be sufficient protection. In addition, critical areas hidden in deep woods or bramble patches are neither available for recreation or aesthetic functions (AMEC BAS Wetlands, page 2, mid-page) nor can they be easily observed for monitoring and maintenance needs. While wildlife does play a role, it would appear that it may be more of a detriment to the other buffer functions (water quality issues) than a benefit. (see my comments on items 2-1 & 2-2 above) and should probably not be driving factor in establishing effective buffer widths.
4. AMEC response to citizen comment #72 lists the known pollutants that threatened our ECA's. Of this entire list, only one is beyond the control of property owners; animal waste (from local species). All other pollutants are easily controlled at their source through education and/or BMP's. During construction, there are already stringent requirements for TESC

(temporary erosion and sediment control) practices which contain these pollutants. In addition, please consider the quantities of the listed potential pollutants and the likelihood that these would ever even reach the outer edge of any buffer let alone work their way into the ECA. We have all heard testimony that an unexpected failure could release pollutants into the ECA (or buffer) and while this may be true, please consider the likelihood and evaluate the potential risk against the severe restrictions placed on property owners by excessively large buffers.

5. It should be noted that the AMEC response reports for Stream Buffer reductions and for Wetland Buffer reductions both stated: *"There is no scientifically established or agency approved method for evaluating the functions of riparian (or wetland) buffer[s]..."*. Assuming this to be true, how can any buffer width be either accepted or rejected. The proof can only be seen in real life. Perhaps you should visit sites where there are existing small buffers to streams and/or wetlands and see exactly how well (or poorly) they are functioning. .
6. Lastly, please note the response to citizen comment #113. There apparently is no required buffer width established by any Federal, State or County agency, so you are free to use common sense and rational reasoning to come up with workable but not overbearing buffer requirements. Think outside the box and do the right thing for both the environment and the citizens of Sammamish.

Sincerely,

Robert H. Sorensen

Qualifications:

*I am a 33 year resident of Sammamish and have observed the substantial growth and development of this area during that time. I am an Architect with more than 40 years of experience, the last eight of which I have been designing and permitting custom private residences in jurisdictions throughout the entire Eastside region (including more than 20 here in the City of Sammamish). I have served on various civic boards and committees and hold the community as being of great value. I moved here in 1979 because of the beauty and rural nature of the area and, while substantial growth has occurred during that time, I feel that Sammamish is still a beautiful place to live and my goal is to maintain this beauty while protecting the right of homeowners to utilize their properties to the greatest extent in a manner consistent with these goals.*